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ABSTRACT

Sedlacek and Brooks in measuring the attitudes of whites toward blacks with the Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) have used trained white administrators in all previous studies. The purpose of white administrators was to avoid calling attention to the racial variable being measured. However the instrument is not the entire simulus presented to subjects (Ss). A number of studies have shown that the characteristics, including race, of the researcher can affect results. The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of race of the experimenter administering the SAS on obtained results. Results indicated that there were no measureable effects attributable to the race of the person administering the SAS. Ss responded very similarly to Ss in previous administrations, that is whites generally responded negatively to blacks in personal or social situations. Evidence from this and other studies seems to indicate that the contextual situations provided by the SAS are sufficiently difficult to ignore, so that the S does make a racial response. Also Ss tend not to be distracted by extraneous variables such as race of experimenter, or the particular term used to denote race on the SAS. (Author)

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RACE AS AN EXPERIMENTER EFFECT IN RACIAL ATTITUDE MEASUREMENT

William E. Sedlacek and Glenwood C. Brooks, Jr.

Research Report # 1-71

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SUMMARY

Sedlacek and Brooks in measuring the attitudes of whites toward blacks with the Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) have used trained white administrators in all previous studies. The purpose of white administrators was to avoid calling attention to the racial variable being measured. However the instrument is not the entire stimulus presented to subjects (*S*s). A number of studies have shown that the characteristics, including race, of the researcher can affect results. The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of race of the experimenter administering the SAS on obtained results.

Results indicated that there were no measureable effects attributable to the race of the person administering the SAS. *S*s responded very similarly to *S*s in previous administrations, that is whites generally responded negatively to blacks in personal or social situations. Evidence from this and other studies seems to indicate that the contextual situations provided by the SAS are sufficiently difficult to ignore, so that the *S* does make a racial response. Also *S*s tend not to be distracted by extraneous variables such as race of experimenter, or the particular term used to denote race on the SAS.

The difficulties of adequately measuring the attitudes of whites toward Negroes or blacks have been noted previously (Shaw and Wright, 1967). Sedlacek and Brooks (1970a, 1970b) have summarized these as being (a) lack of contemporary content in existing measures, (b) lack of validity information, and (c) inadequate assessment techniques to measure social reinforcement for being tolerant, or positive, toward blacks.

Sedlacek and Brooks (1970a, 1970b) demonstrated that the insertion of the word "black" into a social or personal situation caused subjects (*S*s) to respond differently and generally more negatively than if race were not mentioned. They attempted to avoid the measurement problems noted above in their Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) by using contemporary situations and terminology (e.g., black), by providing validity evidence, and by using a technique which apparently relied on the fact that half of the *S*s were unaware that racial attitudes were being measured.

Sedlacek and Brooks criticized the conclusion reached by Rokeach, Smith and Evans (1960); that belief in an issue, not race, determines the attitude of one person toward another. Rokeach et al. used a technique whereby *S*s were given a choice in responding more positively to a person of a certain race or with certain beliefs. Sedlacek and Brooks argued that given the choice of a highly emotionally-bound alternative (race) and a more rational, ego-defendable choice (belief in an issue) *S*s tend to "run for psychological cover" and choose the belief. Thus Sedlacek and Brooks felt that racial attitudes were not given a chance to be measured in Rokeach's model. Evidence that it appears socially unacceptable to verbalize or even to admit to oneself one's own prejudices has been provided by Schuman and Harding (1964), Zavallone and Cook (1965), Sedlacek and Brooks (1970a, 1970c, 1971) and Sigall and Page (1970).

Because of this positive social set, Sedlacek and Brooks (1970a, 1970b) made a big point of the importance of having half of the *S*s (those with a neutral form) unaware that racial attitudes were being measured. However work by Brooks and Sedlacek (1970) indicated that essentially the same attitudinal phenomena occur regardless of whether a neutral form or one that specifies white is used. Thus it could be that since whites would tend to think of whites in a neutral situation, it is not surprising. However, since there apparently was a social set to be tolerant, a more parsimonious explanation may be that despite the knowledge that maybe something racial was being measured, the methodology of the study was not clear, and hence it would be difficult to know exactly how to alter responses to the items.

However, the instrument itself is not the entire stimulus presented to *S*s. Rosenthal and Rosnow (1969) provide a great deal of evidence that characteristics of experimenters or researchers administering a study can significantly influence results. In previous work on the SAS, white administrators trained to be as unobtrusive as possible, but with knowledge of the purpose of the study, were employed.

Kraus (1962) and Summers and Hammonds (1966) studied the effects of experimenter race on racial attitudes. They found that a team of Negro and white investigators resulted in more positive racial attitudes from *S*s than either all white or all Negro researchers. *S*s were eleventh graders and college students. Several studies have also found that with children as *S*s experimenter race can affect picture or doll preferences (Trent 1954, Vaughn 1964), although Greenwald and Oppenheim (1968) found no differences. Sattler (1970 p.146) summarizes racial experimenter effects as follows:

"The experimenter's race affects a number of subtle attitude and preference variables in both children and college students."

The purpose of the current study was to determine what effects the race of the experimenters administering the SAS had on the obtained results.

Method

The same SAS social and personal situations used in Sedlacek and Brooks' (1970a, 1970b) original work were used in the current study. The situations represented instances where race might be a variable in reactions to each situation. For each situation ten bipolar Semantic Differential scales were written (Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum, 1957), making a total of 100 items in the SAS (see Table 2). Two forms of the SAS were developed. Each contains the same situations, bipolar scales and instructions except the word black was inserted into Form B. Form A makes no mention of race (see Table 1). The positive pole for each item was varied randomly from left to right to avoid response set. Both forms A and B were administered to two groups. One group (black administrator) was administered the SAS by seven black administrators. The other group (white administrator) was administered the SAS by seven white administrators. The administrators in each group were graduate and undergraduate students trained to administer the SAS.

The SAS was administered to a sample of prospective University of Maryland students attending a 1970 summer orientation program during two dates selected at random. Usable N's were 204 for the black administrator group (Form A=101 and Form B=103) and 115 for the white administrator group (Form A=57 and Form B=58). Black *S*s and those not completing the SAS were eliminated from the samples. Unusable N's were 21 for the black administrator group and 13 for the white administrator group.

A two way aralysis of variance (fixed model-.05 level) was conducted for each item with Form (A or B) and Experimenter Race (white or black) as the main effects.

Results and Discussion

Table 2 shows that the main effect of Form was significant for 38 of the 100 items; the main effect of Experimenter Race was significant on only four of the 100 items and the interaction term significant on only three of the 100 items. According to Sakoda, Cohen and Beall (1954) one would expect nine tests to be significant at .05 for 100 tests made. Thus the main effect of Form is highly significant, while Experimenter Race and the interaction of Form and Experimenter Race are not significant across the entire instrument. The number of items significant, and the pattern and direction of differences for Form are quite consistent with previous studies on the SAS (Sedlacek and Brooks 1970a, 1970b; Brooks and Sedlacek, 1970). These studies have found between 35 and 55 items significant at .05 using the original and several other forms of the SAS (e.g., white vs Negro referents). The N's for any one form have varied between 70 and 246 on samples of *S*s similar to those participating in the current study.

However the race of the experimenter had no measureable effect on the results of the SAS. Considering this result in terms of previous work on the SAS, it appears that the SAS provides a valid and reliable measure of attitudes of whites toward blacks regardless of the race of the administrator or the particular racial referent used, and regardless of the *S*'s predisposition to respond positively to blacks.

The best explanation the writers have for the above conclusion is that the contextual situations provided by the SAS are sufficiently difficult to ignore, so that the *S* does respond to race as the primary stimulus in the situation. *S*s tend not to be distracted by extraneous variables such as race of experimenter, or the particular term used to denote race on the SAS.

TABLE 1

Instructions and Situations from the Situational Attitude Scale*

INSTRUCTIONS

This questionnaire measures how poeple think and feel about a number of social and personal incidents and situations. It is not a test so there are no right or wrong answers. The questionnaire is anonymous so please DO NOT SIGN YOUR NAME.

Each item or situation is followed by 10 descriptive word scales. Your task is to select, for each descriptive scale, the rating which best describes YOUR feelings towards the item.

Sample item: Going out on a date

happy ' A ' B ' C ' D ' E ' sad

You would indicate the direction and extent of your feelings (e.g., you might select B) by indicating your choice (B) on your response sheet by blackening in the appropriate space for that word scale. DO NOT MARK ON THE BOOKLET. PLEASE RESPOND TO ALL WORD SCALES.

Sometimes you may feel as though you had the same item before on the questionnaire. This will not be the case, so DO NOT LOOK BACK AND FORTH through the items. Do not try to remember how you checked similar items earlier in the questionnaire. MAKE EACH ITEM A SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT. Respond as honestly as possible without puzzling over individual items. Respond with your first impressions whenever possible.

SITUATIONS

	FORM A	FORM B
I.	A new family moves in next door to you.	A new black family moves in next door to you.
II.	You read in the paper that a man has raped a woman.	You read in the paper that a black man has raped a white woman.
III.	It is evening and a man appears at your door saying he is selling magazines.	It is evening and a black man appears at your door saying he is selling magazines.
IV.	You are walking down the street alone and must pass a corner where a group of five young men are loitering.	You are walking down the street alone and must pass a corner where a group of five young black men are loitering.
V.	Your best friend has just become engaged.	Your best friend has just become engaged to a black person.
VI.	You are stopped for speeding by a policeman.	You are stopped for speeding by a black policeman.
VII.	A new person joins your social group.	A new black person joins your social group.
VIII.	You see a youngster steal something in a dimestore.	You see a black youngster steal something in a dimestore.
IX.	Some students on campus stage a demonstration.	Some black students on campus stage a demonstration.
X.	You get on a bus and you are the only person who has to stand.	You get on a bus that has all black people aboard and you are the only person who has to stand.

*The Situational Attitude Scale is copyrighted and available from the authors on request.

TABLE 2

Summary of Analyses of Variance for SAS Items*

ITEM NO.	SITUATIONS BIPOLAR ADJECTIVE DIMENSION	FORM MS	EXPERI-MENTER MS	FXE MS	WITHIN GROUPS MS	WITHIN GROUPS SS	TOTAL SS
	I. NEW FAMILY NEXT DOOR						
1	good-bad	12.47**	1.09	0.00	0.96	303.09	316.65
2	safe-unsafe	0.09	0.19	2.25	0.99	311.85	314.38
3	angry-not angry	0.73	0.13	0.47	1.12	352.80	354.13
4	friendly-unfriendly	0.23	0.04	0.13	0.79	248.85	249.25
5	sympathetic-not sympathetic	4.80	0.82	0.02	1.50	472.50	478.14
6	nervous-calm	2.79	1.93	1.84	1.53	481.95	488.51
7	happy-sad	7.97**	0.10	1.17	0.92	289.80	299.04
8	objectionable-acceptable	0.09	2.24	0.04	1.26	396.90	399.27
9	desirable-undesirable	6.43**	0.04	0.50	1.06	333.90	340.87
10	suspicious-trusting	0.00	0.72	1.93	1.26	396.90	399.55
	II. MAN RAPED WOMAN						
11	affection-disgust	0.18	0.09	0.24	0.69	217.35	217.86
12	relish-repulsion	0.01	0.44	0.22	0.71	223.65	224.32
13	happy-sad	0.49	0.03	0.05	0.67	211.05	211.62
14	friendly-hostile	0.21	0.15	0.06	0.88	277.20	277.62
15	uninvolved-involved	0.28	0.00	1.77	1.82	573.30	575.35
16	hope-hopelessness	0.50	0.17	0.01	1.39	437.85	438.53
17	aloof-outraged	0.01	2.13	3.03	1.04	327.60	332.77
18	injure-kill	0.05	6.26**	0.42	1.33	418.95	425.68
19	safe-fearful	0.00	2.53	1.05	1.44	453.60	457.18
20	empathetic-can't understand	0.00	0.51	0.59	1.64	516.60	517.70
	III. MAN SELLING MAGAZINES						
21	relaxed-startled	7.70**	2.66	0.20	1.49	469.35	479.91
22	receptive-cautious	28.17**	1.14	0.01	1.43	450.45	479.77
23	excited-unexcited	3.25	6.97**	0.07	1.27	400.05	410.34
24	glad-angered	10.37**	0.02	1.78**	0.43	135.45	147.62
25	pleased-annoyed	8.36**	1.65	2.99	0.86	270.90	283.90
26	indifferent-suspicious	4.97	1.67	0.17	1.92	604.80	611.61
27	tolerable-intolerable	27.85**	0.12	0.01	1.28	403.20	431.18
28	afraid-secure	6.45**	0.45	0.79	1.29	406.35	414.04
29	friend-enemy	14.19**	0.05	0.03	0.78	245.70	259.97
30	unprotected-protected	0.18	0.13	1.41	1.17	368.55	370.27
	IV. CORNER OF LOITERING MEN						
31	relaxed-tensed	0.04	0.03	5.14**	1.22	384.30	389.51
32	pleased-angered	0.59	0.18	1.75	0.53	166.95	169.47
33	superior-inferior	1.71	0.18	0.02	1.03	324.45	326.36
34	smarter-dumber	0.76	0.12	0.48	0.70	220.50	221.86
35	whiter-blacker	36.14**	0.15	0.19	0.86	270.90	307.38
36	aggressive-passive	0.01	2.02	0.03	1.13	355.95	358.01
37	safe-unsafe	0.00	0.12	0.88	1.17	368.55	369.55
38	friendly-unfriendly	13.68**	0.84	1.44	1.19	374.85	390.81
39	excited-unexcited	0.04	3.14	0.07	1.29	406.35	409.60
40	trivial-important	0.01	1.64	0.20	1.40	441.00	442.85

* df=1 for each main effect and interaction so MS=SS; df Within Groups=315.
** F significant beyond .05 level.

TABLE 2

Summary of Analyses of Variance for SAS Items*
(Continued)

ITEM NO.	SITUATIONS BIPOLAR ADJECTIVE DIMENSION	FORM MS	EXPERI-MENTER MS	FXE MS	WITHIN GROUPS MS	WITHIN GROUPS SS	TOTAL SS
	V. FRIEND BECOMES ENGAGED						
41	aggressive-passive	78.80**	4.71	0.03	1.60	504.00	587.54
42	happy-sad	42.76**	2.15	1.09	1.47	463.05	509.05
43	tolerable-intolerable	7.82**	3.87	0.57	1.01	318.15	330.41
44	complimented-insulted	27.60**	0.22	0.01	1.02	321.30	349.13
45	angered-overjoyed	40.88**	1.84	0.07	0.94	296.10	338.89
46	secure-fearful	0.01	0.18	0.03	1.38	434.70	434.92
47	hopeful-hopeless	10.97**	7.29**	0.33	1.29	406.35	424.94
48	excited-unexcited	39.85**	0.81	0.15	1.09	343.35	384.16
49	right-wrong	7.26**	2.23	0.27	1.45	456.75	466.51
50	disgusting-pleasing	41.21**	4.71**	0.01	1.22	384.30	430.23
	VI. STOPPED BY POLICEMAN						
51	calm-nervous	87.39**	1.84	2.17	2.07	652.05	743.45
52	trusting-suspicious	121.26**	0.46	0.18	1.43	450.45	572.35
53	afraid-safe	163.58**	3.18	9.68**	1.83	576.45	752.89
54	friendly-unfriendly	18.32**	0.61	0.15	1.45	456.75	475.83
55	tolerant-intolerant	23.04**	0.06	0.12	1.33	418.95	442.17
56	bitter-pleasant	15.73**	1.03	0.06	1.55	488.25	505.07
57	cooperative-uncooperative	2.90	0.17	0.42	0.78	245.70	249.19
58	acceptive-belligerent	8.65**	0.18	1.63	1.09	343.35	353.81
59	inferior-superior	0.44	1.38	0.89	0.82	258.30	261.01
60	smarter-dumber	0.19	0.20	0.00	0.80	252.00	252.39
	VII. PERSON JOINS SOCIAL GROUP						
61	warm-cold	0.09	0.28	1.07	0.88	277.20	278.64
62	sad-happy	0.69	0.97	0.03	0.87	274.05	275.74
63	superior-inferior	4.98**	0.01	0.48	0.40	126.00	131.47
64	threatened-neutral	23.15**	0.19	1.86	1.01	318.15	343.35
65	pleased-displeased	1.77	0.03	0.29	0.95	299.25	301.34
66	understanding-indifferent	0.15	0.59	1.21	1.44	453.60	455.55
67	suspicious-trusting	11.43**	0.96	1.44	0.99	311.85	325.68
68	disappointed-elated	2.01	0.50	0.09	0.71	223.65	226.25
69	favorable-unfavorable	0.26	0.02	0.04	1.04	327.60	327.92
70	uncomfortable-comfortable	4.62**	0.03	0.54	1.18	371.70	376.89
	VIII. YOUNGSTER STEALS						
71	surprising-not surprising	2.59	0.03	0.01	1.99	626.85	629.42
72	sad-happy	0.07	0.21	0.03	0.84	264.60	264.91
73	disinterested-interested	7.79**	2.28	0.17	1.72	541.80	552.04
74	close-distant	15.45**	0.06	1.71	1.60	504.00	521.22
75	understandable-baffling	13.81**	0.02	0.03	1.58	497.70	511.56
76	responsible-not responsible	0.69	6.24	1.24	1.71	538.65	546.82
77	concerned-unconcerned	5.16	0.14	0.04	1.58	497.70	503.04
78	sympathy-indifference	4.65	1.95	1.17	1.67	526.05	533.82
79	expected-unexpected	2.78	3.63	0.22	1.29	406.35	412.98
80	hopeful-hopeless	0.08	0.76	0.03	1.25	393.75	394.62

* df=1 for each main effect and interaction so MS=SS; df Within Groups=315.
** F significant beyond .05 level.

TABLE 2

Summary of Analyses of Variance for SAS Items*
(Continued)

ITEM NO.	SITUATIONS BIPOLAR ADJECTIVE DIMENSION	FORM MS	EXPERI-MENTER MS	FXE MS	WITHIN GROUPS MS	WITHIN GROUPS SS	TOTAL SS
	IX. CAMPUS DEMONSTRATION						
81	bad-good	3.56	0.25	0.22	1.65	519.75	523.78
82	understanding-indifferent	4.56	2.12	2.61	1.47	463.05	472.34
83	suspicious-trusting	0.10	0.22	0.05	1.22	384.30	384.67
84	safe-unsafe	2.23	1.53	0.43	1.49	469.35	473.54
85	disturbed-undisturbed	6.09	0.06	0.37	1.67	526.05	532.57
86	justified-unjustified	0.42	0.70	1.52	1.24	390.60	393.24
87	tense-calm	0.32	1.47	1.40	1.35	425.25	428.44
88	hate-love	0.56	0.28	0.93	0.81	255.15	256.92
89	wrong-right	0.03	0.32	0.57	1.36	428.40	429.32
90	humorous-serious	7.71**	2.10	0.69	0.96	302.40	313.17
	X. ONLY PERSON STANDING						
91	fearful-secure	21.03**	3.50	1.98	1.48	466.20	492.71
92	tolerable-intolerable	5.57**	0.62	0.20	1.37	431.55	437.94
93	hostile-indifferent	0.25	1.23	0.00	1.31	412.65	414.13
94	important-trivial	0.03	2.63	1.30	1.41	444.15	448.11
95	conspicuous-inconspicuous	0.41	5.01	3.87	1.56	491.40	500.69
96	calm-anxious	1.63	0.25	1.34	2.01	633.15	636.37
97	indignant-understanding	0.34	0.22	0.00	1.21	381.15	381.71
98	comfortable-uncomfortable	0.33	1.33	1.06	1.73	544.95	547.67
99	hate-love	0.01	0.29	0.02	0.64	201.60	201.92
100	not resentful-resentful	3.92	0.12	3.66	1.57	494.55	502.25

* df=1 for each main effect and interaction so MS=SS; df Within Groups=315.
** F significant beyond .05 level.

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